

EXHIBIT V

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ConnectU inspired by BU students

By Phoebe Sexton

While ConnectU hasn't been used much by Boston University students, it was initially inspired by them.

Twin Olympic rowing hopefuls Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss and internet banking firm employee Divya Narendra, all 2004 Harvard University graduates and former housemates, are the faces behind the latest addition to the online socializing scene.

Two years ago, Tyler, one of the site's three co-founders, dated a BU student. During his time spent in West Campus, Winklevoss was shocked by the student population size and the small number of students he knew.

"It really opened my eyes to the amount of students in Boston," Tyler Winklevoss said.

Tyler Winklevoss said that the city's large number of people was a great and untapped resource and the old-fashioned way of meeting people was no longer possible with today's lifestyle.

"There are only so many hours and such a large group of students is fragmented with no real centralized meeting place," he said.

Starting in December of 2002, the trio put full effort into realizing their vision for an online directory and actual meeting place, first through a Harvard-only site called HarvardConnection, which would then be opened up to other schools to allow further networking.

After 17 months, several programmers and a handful of various problems, ConnectU.com launched on May 21, 2004. As of Tuesday, the site had nearly 14,000 users representing 197 schools, Tyler Winklevoss said. The site has seen a steady increase in membership, averaging about 10 percent growth every week.

Despite the overwhelming success of competitor thefacebook.com, the group is confident its site will take off soon, feeling they have a better product with helpful features for users.

"Most of the feedback we've gotten has been really positive," said Tyler Winklevoss. "One person thought we ripped off thefacebook, but that's not exactly the story."

The two are currently embroiled in a federal lawsuit regarding whether or not thefacebook creator Mark Zuckerberg stole ConnectU's idea.

Both websites offer similar functions and stemmed from Harvard University students.

ConnectU users can fill out a profile and post a picture, freely browse profiles from other schools, chat with other logged-in users, keep their own blog and resell textbooks.

Tyler Winklevoss said the Harvard group made BU a member of the initial site because it was "Harvard's next door neighbor," saying there was a good amount of respect and curiosity on both ends.

As of Tuesday, Boston University had 1,134 students registered with 80 to 90 percent having a picture posted in their profile. It may not be more than 4,000 BU boasts on thefacebook, but Tyler Winklevoss said the numbers would only go up.

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"Having pictures up is a healthy sign," he said.

Tyler Winklevoss added the photos demonstrated users spent a fair amount of time filling out the forms of the site. He also said that BU looks good compared to usage by other schools.

Most of the BU students surveyed who were part of ConnectU agreed the site had "cool" and useful features, specifically highlighting the chat option. However, one student said the features were excessive and useless.

Four of the six who responded said they preferred thefacebook only because there were more people registered but that ConnectU had potential and they were eager for more students to join.

"ConnectU has cool features but no one is really on it yet," said College of Arts and Sciences sophomore Rachel Lupinacci, echoing the others' sentiments. "Once more people join, it will be more enjoyable."
